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AUTHOR Osterman, Karen F.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Findings of the first phase of a longitudinal study that developed a descriptive profile of new principals in New York City are presented in this paper. A survey of 216 newly appointed principals in New York City elicited 158 responses, a 73 percent response rate. Findings indicate that despite the emphasis on aspects of transformational leadership, the new principals' conceptions of their roles appear to be traditional: they view themselves as instructional leaders; give more attention to general managerial roles; and resist sharing authority. Within the district framework, the new principals see themselves as subordinates who have little autonomy and are expected to be compliant. They view bureaucratic obstacles as outside their control and lack strategies for dealing with obstacles that directly impact their performance. Given these findings, it seems unlikely that even those who espouse transformational leadership will be able to implement transformational-leadership strategies without additional district support. If superintendents want principals to act as change agents, they must convey those expectations clearly and provide principals with the authority, autonomy, and resources necessary to exercise leadership. (Contains 26 references.) (LMI)

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New Principals: Problems, Priorities, and Preparation

Karen F. Osterman
Hofstra University

Gary M. Crow
Louisiana State Univ.

Jacqueline Rosen
Bank Street College

Introduction

In summer 1991, the New York City Board of Education introduced an early retirement package that resulted in over 200 school principal vacancies. As a result, in September of that year, 216 new principals began their work in the New York City public school system. This turnover in the leadership of approximately 25% of the city's schools was a potentially significant event.

In conjunction with this turnover, the school system chancellor, Joseph Fernandez, recommended that the New York City Board of Education contract with Bank Street College of Education to provide a professional development program to serve principals from every community school district that requested assistance. Of the 32 school districts, 21 decided to participate in the program. As a result, the Bank Street New Principals Program began serving almost 75% of the new principals in New York City.

Besides its program of service to new principals, Bank Street also began a longitudinal study of principal socialization. The study was designed to develop a more detailed understanding of principal leadership in this highly bureaucratic and ethnically

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and socioeconomically diverse urban environment. This paper presents the first phase of this study.

Over the last twenty years, efforts to improve the quality of education at the school level have focused on the principal as one of the most important figures. Recognizing the significance of the leadership role, reform efforts have focused on the need to improve the quality of principal performance. As a result, in recent years, there has been a nationwide growth in the number of principal centers, tightening of certification requirements, and modification of administrative preparation programs at the university level.

One strategy for improving principal performance has been to encourage the development of more innovative conceptions of the role. This strategy seeks to prepare principals to be transformational leaders who support the collaborative work of teachers and encourage the involvement of parents. In this paper, we offer an analysis of data collected at the initial stage of an innovative principal professional development program. We believe it can be useful for understanding the leadership conceptions that new principals bring, the socialization process to more innovative conceptions, and the personal and professional support needed to facilitate this socialization process. Such an analysis should be useful to other attempts to develop transformational leaders.

Research Context

The first few years of the principalship are critical in influencing administrative leadership practice (Hart, 1991, 1993). The transition period or the time of succession is most critical for new principals. Although we know a great deal about effective practice,

we know little about the way in which these effective practices emerge in the early years of the principalship. We have limited knowledge of the work life and demands that new principals face (Parkay & Hall, 1992); and even less knowledge of the demands confronting urban principals. Among those studies that have focused on new principals, there is little attention to the unique needs and conditions confronting elementary and secondary principals in a highly bureaucratized and ethnically and socioeconomically diverse urban environment. Parkay and Hall's recent nationwide study, for example, focuses on secondary principals who were predominantly white (90%) males (85%) located in rural (60%) and suburban (21%) schools.

During the entry period, principals try to exert their leadership and function in a way consistent with their personal values and professional training. Simultaneously, they experience pressures from subordinates, superiors, and the community to act in a way consistent with their expectations. Leaders may influence their organizations, but the reverse is also true. New principals enter schools and districts with clearly defined and distinctive cultures. Like new teachers, they are socialized to fit rather than the reverse. Thus, both personal and organizational features influence the socialization process and the development of conceptions of the role.

Previous research on the principalship suggests that what principals do--their practice--is a direct consequence of what they think (goals, vision, beliefs, values, theories-in-use) and what they know how to do (skills or competencies) (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Barnett, 1990; Kottkamp, 1982; Leithwood et al., 1990; Schon, 1983; Sergiovanni, 1991). Consequently, professional development programs have emphasized various

strategies to improve professional skills and competencies. These have included reflective practice, which is designed to enable individuals to examine their values and beliefs and develop a vision to guide practice. These strategies have also included skill development programs designed to improve technical proficiency in areas such as staff supervision, instructional leadership, decision making, and time management.

While clearly principals can influence school effectiveness, we also know that there are other variables that impact on the principal's ability to influence the quality of learning and the likelihood of innovation at the building level. The principalship is a middle management position; the organizational, political and social contexts in which principals work influence the ways they exercise leadership. We know, for example, that factors such as role definitions, expectations, and structural and cultural characteristics of the school system, the school, and the community affect leadership practices (Lortie, 1988; Marshall & Mitchell, 1991; Sussman, 1986; Miles and Louis, 1990). These factors external to the principal interact with an individual's mental processes and states (knowledge and beliefs, attitudes, feelings and skills) and affect the nature and effectiveness of principals' practices (Crow, 1991; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Hart, 1991, 1993; Leithwood et al., 1990). Based on their review of the literature on the principalship from 1974 to 88, Leithwood et al. (1990) concluded that there is currently little research that "explores relationships among external influences, internal states and principals' practices and that such research would help us understand how effective practice develops, a crucial matter about which current research has little to say" (p. 22).

School effectiveness research led by Edmonds (1979), Brookover and Lezotte (1979) has identified a cluster of behaviors common to effective principals. With respect to internal processes, highly effective principals, for example, demonstrated high levels of commitment to goals for the school. Also, they articulated an overall vision for the school, established high standards for goals achievement, and actively worked toward development of widespread agreement concerning such standards (Leithwood et al., 1990).

Subsequently, additional research designed to assess the means by which principals facilitate consensus and change in an effective school environment has begun to focus on transformational leadership: a process of leadership which enhances individual and collective problem solving capacities of organizational members (Burns, 1978). In essence, transformational leadership is closely related to teacher empowerment and school reform. School cultures that are truly collaborative are likely to be schools that are highly effective in achieving shared goals. Effective school principals are likely to be those who employ transformational leadership strategies (Kushman, 1992; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990; Sagor, 1991).

Although the literature on effective schools and transformational leadership is considerable, there is little research on how principals develop role conceptions that support the transformative and collaborative cultures necessary for school effectiveness. There is also little research on the kinds of personal and professional support necessary to facilitate the development of these innovative conceptions of the role. The study

reported in this paper is our attempt to contribute to a research base to inform our practice on principal socialization.

Methodology

As the first phase of a longitudinal study, a survey was distributed to the newly appointed principals in New York City. The purpose of the survey was to develop a comprehensive descriptive profile of these new principals as they began their work: Who are these new principals? How do they define their role as principal? How do they define expectations, their own and others'? What do they view as their major problems and what are their most important priorities? What are their main sources of support and their major obstacles to success? Finally, how do they define their professional development needs at this critical point in their careers and what are their career aspirations?

The survey consisting of 38 open ended and closed questions was distributed to the entire group of new principals (261) and completed and returned by 158 (73%). This paper presents initial findings of that survey.

Findings

Our report of the findings of this initial study begins with a description of the personal characteristics of these new principals. Then we move to an analysis of their perceptions regarding role expectations; problems, priorities, and preparation needs; and obstacles and support. Based on our review of the research context, these characteristics and perceptions should be useful in helping us understand the role conceptions of new principals in light of personal beliefs and organizational expectations.

Personal Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics. In terms of personal characteristics, the group of new principals is unusual in its representations of women and racial and ethnic minorities. The respondents ranged in age from 35 to 62 years with an average age of 46. Surprisingly, women constituted a majority of the new appointments (58%). While most of the principals identify themselves as Caucasian (61%), 19% are African American, 18% are Hispanic, and 2% are Asian. In terms of marital status, the majority were married (71%) or had been married in the past (14%). Regarding religious preference, the largest number were Catholic (42%), 29% were Jewish, and 23% were Protestant.

Status, Experience, and Education. Besides demographic characteristics, the new principals bring with them educational, teaching and administrative experiences that are likely to influence their perception of the role. They are also appointed in ways and to school levels that influence expectations--both theirs and others--of the job. The majority (88%) of these new principals moved into the principalship from other administrative positions, primarily assistant principalships (72%). Only 2% moved to the principalship directly from teaching. Men had slightly more years of experience as assistant principal than women (6.6 years vs. 4) as well as more diverse experience. Women's administrative experience was more likely to be at the elementary level, while men more frequently reported experience at both elementary and secondary levels. Over 84% of the principals were appointed from within their own districts but only 39% were appointed from within the same school. In terms of education, 6% had completed a doctoral

degree; 60% had post masters credits; and 33% had completed a masters degree. One person reported completing only the bachelors degree.

Most of the new principals work in elementary settings (74%). Nineteen percent are in junior high or intermediate schools; 7% are in high schools; and 1% are in special education schools. Although ostensibly assuming positions of formal authority and leadership, only 25% had regular appointments with the other 75% appointed as interim-acting. This large percentage is due to the Board of Education appointment process that requires an interim-acting stage before regular appointment.

Aspirations and Job Satisfaction. Although these individuals have only recently become principals, their assessment of the job and their aspirations in the occupation should help indicate their conceptions of the role. If given the choice again, 56% indicated that they would certainly select educational administration as a career. Looking ahead five years, 82% envision themselves as principals in the same school or in another school. Ten years ahead, only 50% expect to be either a principal (34%) or a district administrator (16%).

Role Expectations

Principals bring expectations regarding how to perform the job: what things are most important. In addition, others have expectations for them. What others expect and what individual principals expect of themselves affect the conception and vision of the role. We asked principals to describe their expectations for themselves as well as those of the individuals and/or groups whom they perceived as most influential for the

principal's performance. We grouped responses into four major categories: leadership, management, human relations, and personal characteristics.

Leadership. In terms of their personal expectations, most of the responses were about evenly divided between leadership (30%) and management (34%) functions. In the leadership area they described the need for effective principals to establish a vision, set goals, maintain high expectations, and model appropriate behavior. They also focused specifically on the need for instructional leadership. Fifty percent of the responses in the leadership category addressed instructional leadership and half emphasized the need for the principal to be knowledgeable and skilled in curriculum and instruction. Other responses mentioned the need to provide supervision, both evaluation and staff development; to monitor or assess student performance; and to develop and implement effective programs.

Management. In the management category, attention was evenly distributed among several tasks. Communication (keeping constituents well-informed) was the most frequently mentioned followed by the need to keep the building functioning smoothly in compliance with district guidelines and to insure safety. Also mentioned as important strategies were high visibility and accessibility, and resource allocation (providing necessary resources to teachers and students). Twenty percent of the responses in this category addressed the principal's perceived need to be involved in everything, to be seen as the person in charge, and to be capable of exercising the power of leadership. Thirteen percent mentioned the need to be productive, particularly in achieving higher

levels of student performance. Only 2 responses focused on the need to be involved in the community.

Human relations. Nineteen percent of the total responses emphasized human relations aspects of their positions. Seventy-five percent of the responses in this category involved consideration for others (caring, sensitivity, listening, praising, supporting, establishing a positive climate) while only 25% (5% of the total responses) referred to the need to involve others in school matters. Of these, the overwhelming majority described "involvement" as a means to accomplish personal goals rather than as an attempt to engage others in a unified team effort.

In another forced-choice question, when asked to assess the value of including teachers in school decisions, the overwhelming majority (88%) responded that principals should involve teachers in a wide range of decisions because it increases their commitment and the quality of their work. On the open-ended responses, however, no more than three principals described involvement as collaborative effort.

Personal characteristics. Fourteen percent of the total responses identified personal characteristics that were important for effective leadership. The majority focused on the need for consistency: to be fair but firm, to be tough but supportive. Others emphasized flexibility or mentioned the value of humor and hard work.

Role Expectations of Influential Groups. The respondents identified those groups that have the most influence on the way principals perform their jobs. Among the seven choices, principals identified teachers and professional staff (29%) as most influential followed by the district superintendent (27%) and students (21%). When we combined

first, second, and third choices, teachers and professionals were most frequently mentioned (27%), followed by parents and community (26%). The district superintendent received only 18% of the total choices.

The respondents then defined the expectations of these groups: What do you need to do to be perceived as effective by....? While their expectations for themselves are somewhat diverse and cover different dimensions of leadership, their perceptions of others' expectations are distinct and less global. In terms of district superintendents, for example, of 130 responses, 70% focused on management responsibilities and over 50% of those emphasized the need for strict compliance with district guidelines and expectations. Seventeen percent of the responses focused on leadership with more emphasis on instructional than general leadership functions.

Principals perceived parents as expecting them to attend to management (44%) and human relations (39%). Managerial expectations emphasized communication and visibility. In the human relations area, consideration (58%) received more attention than involvement (34%).

Of the three groups identified as most influential, principals regarded teacher expectations as most comprehensive and stressed the need for human relations behaviors (38%), leadership (26%), and management skills (22%). In the human relations area, principals again emphasized consideration (77%) more than collaboration (17%).

Regarding parental involvement, 13% of the open-ended responses regarding principal effectiveness relative to parents emphasized the need for involvement in school matters. Yet, their responses to another item concerning appropriate areas for parent

involvement emphasized a somewhat traditional perspective limiting involvement to fund raising (92%), volunteer work (70%) and assistance in the classroom (55%). The only direct decision making involvement supported by more than 50% of the respondents was in developing student discipline procedures (81%) and planning student activities (67.5%). On the other hand, between 23% and 47% of the respondents saw the need to involve parents in a broad range of decision making activities such as review of grading and reporting practices, student supervision, selection of school personnel, evaluation of school climate, review of instructional materials, and development and evaluation of curriculum. Only 6 responses recommended the use of parents in personnel evaluation.

Problems, Priorities, and Preparation

Another way to understand the role conception of these principals is to analyze their problems, their priorities for the job, and the additional preparation they need to perform their new roles.

Problems. From among a list of problems confronting school administrators, the new principals in New York City classified the following as serious: 1) student achievement, 2) space and facilities, 3) bureaucratic procedures, 4) student discipline, 5) staff competence and 6) staff morale. Those problems viewed as only moderately serious were parental support, attendance, student morale, and staff support. In open-ended responses, staff problems were the most frequently mentioned with comments describing unlicensed and incompetent teachers and assistant administrators. Since principals in the New York City system have little or no control over staffing and facility decisions, one might categorize these problems as bureaucratic difficulties.

Priorities. Respondents ranked their priorities, from a list of 17 leadership tasks, on a scale from 1-5, most important to not important. Over 50% of the respondents identified the following, in rank order, as the most important priorities: developing good working relationships with teachers (1), parents (2) and students (3); insuring school safety (4); promoting a sense of caring and respect (5); promoting instructional supervision (6); and motivating staff to become involved in school improvement (7). Note that establishing good working relationships with the district superintendent and school board ranked respectively 11 (Mean = 1.9) and 16 (2.48); involving teachers in school governance ranked 14 (2.15); and gathering data about school conditions was the lowest ranked item (2.54).

Other items on the questionnaire indicate the thinking and beliefs that shape the strategies these principals adopt to respond to their problems and priorities. For example, from an extensive list of "important skills and characteristics of a good teacher," the three most frequently named were 1) competence in adjusting instruction to the various learning styles and learning skills of the students (selected among the top three by 106 respondents), 2) interpersonal skills in working with students (71) and 3) skill in developing positive student self-concept (70). Interestingly, all choices that reflected collaborative skills (e.g., sensitivity to differing cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds; skill in developing respect for others in students; and interpersonal skills in working with colleagues or with parents and communities) received fewer combined choices than each of the top three choices. The analysis of these criteria is also useful in understanding what principals meant by the lack of staff competence cited as a serious problem.

Need for additional preparation. When asked about the extent to which they felt the need for additional preparation in specified areas, they rated each on a five point scale from very strong need (1) to no need (5). The areas most frequently identified were finding additional resources (Mean = 1.9), being aware of advances in curriculum and instruction (2.4) and establishing a motivating work place (2.5). Other areas listed received less emphasis: effective management techniques (2.7); analysis of school performance data (2.8); supervision and evaluation (2.8); collaborative decision making (2.9); and effective communication skills (3.2).

Obstacles and Support

These new principals have been in the job long enough to experience obstacles to achieving their goals and to assess the sources of support for overcoming these obstacles. Their perceptions of obstacles and support provide further information regarding their role conceptions: what hinders them and from whom do they seek help.

Obstacles. When asked what were the major obstacles to their success as a principal in the current position, these new principals emphasized resources, staff, and superordinates. Twenty-one percent of the responses involved the lack of resources, primarily occurring because of budget cuts. The lack of student services particularly disheartened the principals. The second most frequently mentioned obstacle (18%) involved staff in the school. This primarily included issues such as staff inexperience and lack of training but also included the problems of uncooperative staff whom they inherited when they took on this position. The third most frequently mentioned obstacle (17%) involved problems created by their superordinates. Several principals mentioned the

board of education and central office in general as an obstacle as well as the politics and bureaucracy created by their superiors. Yet, the primary obstacle that central office creates for these new principals is a lack of autonomy afforded the principal. It is likely that this obstacle restricts the principal's ability to work with staff.

Support. When asked to indicate the level of support they had received from various sources on a five point scale from extremely supportive (1) to not supportive (5), the new principals named parents (Mean = 1.7), the district superintendent (1.8) and teachers (1.9) as most supportive followed by district administrators and principals (2.1). They viewed teachers and administrative unions, the school board, professional organizations, and colleges and universities as only moderately supportive.

In responding to a question as to how helpful district administrators had been in providing support in major areas of responsibility, the principals rated each of 6 areas on a 5-point scale, from extremely helpful (1) to no help (5). The respondents indicated only moderate levels of assistance in each area: curriculum development (Mean = 2.5), supervision and evaluation (2.7), school community relations (2.8), budgeting (2.8), and maintenance (3.1). With respect to school-based management, principals are even less impressed with the support they get from the district (3.4).

Discussion

To interpret the findings we have presented, we return to three major ideas from our literature review: the personal and organizational nature of conceptions of leadership; effective practice and transformative leadership; and personal and professional support.

Conceptions of Leadership

In her review, Hart (1993) comments that much of the succession research examines the change from the perspective of the individual and focuses primarily on the effects of that individual. "This view," she maintains, "is flawed, misrepresenting the social nature of the organizations in which formal leaders work. In reality, the social relationships between formal leaders and their hierarchical subordinates and superordinates play an important part in their influence on the school" (p. 10). The survey responses lend some support to the conclusion that principals themselves incorporate this flawed perspective into their role conceptions. They narrowly define their roles, focusing primarily on leadership within the context of the school building; fail to develop a broad range of strategies needed to deal with the external environment; and thereby limit their likelihood of success.

The first few years of the new principalship are extremely demanding, personally difficult, and very important in determining the principal's future success as an educational leader in the particular school and community. Hart's (1993) review of the research in leader succession shows that new principals are more likely to succeed to the extent that they can work effectively with individuals in the school community. As a means toward establishing good working relationships, Hart (93) recommends that new principals get to know the staff and the school, that they develop an understanding of the new culture.

The survey responses clearly show that principals recognize the influential role that teachers and parents play and the need to develop positive working relationships with them. However, in identifying their action priorities, these new principals give little

attention to data gathering and assessment behaviors that might enable them to develop a clear understanding of the school's culture and conditions. They do, however, emphasize such consideration behaviors as listening. There are no references to the need to develop an understanding of the school as a cultural unit. Yet, this process of learning about the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the school context is "central to gaining acceptance of others" (Hart, p. 14). Although this de-emphasis might be warranted given many in-house appointments, 61% of the principals were assigned to new schools.

The ability of new principals to develop positive working relationships with district personnel also influences their success: "superintendent and patron satisfaction are the most frequent precipitating causes of support or dismissal" (Hart, 1993, p. 284). While the principals place much emphasis on establishing positive working relationships with teachers, students, and parents, there is little emphasis on the need to develop positive working relationships with the district superintendent or with the local school board. This becomes particularly important considering the major problems identified by most of the respondents. Among the top five problems, space and facilities, staff competence, and bureaucratic procedures are matters over which school principals in the New York City Board of Education have little or no direct control. These are also areas in which their ability to improve conditions may be directly related to their ability to persuade the district superintendent to act in their behalf.

Using the Bolman and Deal frame perspective, Osterman (1991) found that in problem solving responses, principals focused primarily on the structural frame and secondarily on the human resource frame but seldom used the political or symbolic

leadership perspectives. Bolman and Deal (1992) in a cross-cultural study of school administrators in the United States and Singapore found that American principals scored highest in the use of the human resource and lowest on both the political and symbolic frames.

Bolman and Deal also found that the use of these frames predicted effectiveness. In the American sample, the structural frame was the best predictor of managerial effectiveness but the worst predictor of leader effectiveness (Bolman & Dean, 1992, p. 324). The symbolic frame was the second best predictor of managerial effectiveness. For effective leadership, the authors found that the political frame was the best predictor.

Regarding the impact of these findings, Bolman and Deal comment that in some organizations an inability to deal with political dynamics is only a modest handicap; in others, it is a fatal flaw. In the New York City school system, many observers might concur that the failure to develop finely-honed political perspectives and skills is, indeed, a fatal flaw. Yet, the statements and responses give little evidence that the new principals emphasize the political nature of their roles in this system. To the contrary, the analysis of their open-ended responses leads to the same finding as the Bolman and Deal study: that principals place more emphasis on the structural (managerial and instructional leadership), human resource, and to a lesser extent, the symbolic (visionary leadership) dimensions of their positions than on the political. Despite the highly politicized nature of the New York City system, references to political strategizing are nearly non-existent. While there are a few references to the need to mobilize parent support as a means of securing district confidence, there is little emphasis given to developing strong relations

with the district superintendent, local school board, the teachers union nor school-based management teams.

It appears that the new principals have retained a view of the principal as instructional leader within the school and have ignored the implications of the bureaucracy of which they are a part. Although they may be cognizant of the political dynamics, they may view politics and instructional leadership as dichotomous and perhaps incompatible dimensions of their roles (Cuban, 1988).

To the extent that Bolman and Deal's findings are generalizable, one would predict that the New York City principals are likely to be better managers than leaders. But within this system where the sources of many school principals' problems are external to the school itself and beyond the direct control of the building principal (space and facilities, incompetent staff, bureaucratic procedures), it is possible that the "system" will constrain their effectiveness even at this level. The heavy and almost unvarying response regarding the superintendents' perceived expectations for unwavering and unquestioning compliance militate against the likelihood of emergent leadership. In fact, only seven respondents referred to leadership behavior expectations of their superintendents.

Transformative Leadership

A turnover of such magnitude in the principalship, long viewed as a key role in creating educational change, raises hopes for educational reform. Perhaps with the influx of new people will come an influx of new ideas and new and more effective leadership conceptions. Much of the school effectiveness research in recent years has described the importance of team work and accordingly, a shift in the role of principal. The shift is

from a top-down authoritative manager to a facilitator, a coordinator who empowers members of the school community and engages them in sharing not only the decisions but the responsibility for the school's performance. These transformational leaders realize change by "their ability to motivate followers to accept and accomplish goals they might not otherwise have embraced" (Tucker-Ladd et al., 1992, p. 403). They articulate a vision and engage people in the achievement of that vision. As a means toward this climate of engagement and problem solving, transformational leaders rely on collaboration to develop and implement school improvement strategies. Not only do they involve people, but they empower individuals to share in leadership.

On the one hand, survey responses suggest that these new principals are familiar with and advocate concepts of transformational leadership: more than 50% emphasize their need to motivate staff to become involved in school improvement. In open ended responses describing their personal notions of effectiveness, 21% of the total mentioned the need to establish or espouse a mission or vision, to develop goals and high expectations, to motivate staff and students and to establish a climate that facilitates learning and teaching.

Various other responses, however, suggest that the new principals' attitudes toward the concepts of transformational leadership are ambivalent. While they recognize the need for involvement in a general sense, they place little emphasis on the development of formal governance mechanisms and offer little recognition to established governance units. Involving teachers, parents, or school-based management teams in

school governance are relatively low priorities. Involving teachers in school governance, for example, ranks 14th.

Responses on a number of items also suggest that the principals do not equate involvement with empowerment, or shared leadership. Their desire to involve others conflicts with their own needs to exercise control. In both the closed and open-ended responses, the principals define their perceived needs to establish their authority, albeit in a caring manner. To be viewed as effective, they express their need to be involved in everything, to be in control, to make decisions and implement policies and procedures, and to comply totally and promptly with district regulations and requests.

At the same time that they talk about involving teachers, the principals retain traditional definitions of the teacher's role, focusing clearly and exclusively on the notion of teacher as technician in the context of the classroom. Although they want to improve their relationships with teachers, more than 71% responded that they would make a decision to improve school effectiveness even if taking action endangered teacher morale and their relationship with the faculty. Only 29% would hold off in the interest of staff morale. While new principals emphasize the importance of communication and involvement, they do not indicate their own need for additional professional development in areas such as communication or collaborative decision-making that influence one's ability to exercise transformational leadership.

Conditions in the school also affect the principals' attitudes toward and commitment to transformational leadership. As the new principals intuitively understand, research demonstrates that teachers strongly influence how principals act. In these

schools, principals describe staff competence and teacher morale as serious problems. It is possible and probable that, confronted with demoralized and recalcitrant staff, administrators would easily and quickly relinquish notions of transformational leadership for a more comfortable pattern of transactional leadership including more traditional forms of rewards and punishments as motivators. This is more likely to occur if the principals attribute these teacher behaviors to individual rather than organizational causes.

Personal and Professional Support

The quality of support available to principals during these first transition years is important in insuring their success. The survey provides some insight into the types of support that might be helpful to new principals in this urban bureaucracy.

Professional development. With reference to professional development needs, the principals are clear in identifying their needs: 71% express a strong or very strong need to improve their skills in finding additional resources, a need that seems consistent with their portrayal of school problems. Yet, an interpretation of their overall responses--and omissions--within the context of the principal succession and leadership research suggests other possibilities. To be successful in the transition, new principals need to develop an understanding of the new school culture, establish positive relationships with members of the school community, and begin to develop and implement short and long-range action plans that address school problems and goals (Hart, 1993). Bolman and Deal (1991, 1992) also suggest that the ability to use multiple perspectives is an important component of effective leadership. The survey findings, however, indicate that principals are unaware of the importance of assessment techniques; and, as we

discussed in detail, they place less emphasis on the political and symbolic dimensions of their roles that are so critical for success.

Another potentially important area for professional development focuses on the dynamics of teacher motivation. An important body of research examines the relationship between organizational conditions and teacher performance. If new principals want to be transformational leaders, they need to understand the ways in which schools influence teacher performance and the strategies to enhance teacher motivation, organizational commitment, and effectiveness. From the survey responses, there is evidence that principals recognize the important role that teachers play, but little evidence that they understand the diverse ways that organizations can improve the quality of teacher morale and performance and enhance organizational commitment.

Organizational support. The survey also enables us to identify strengths and weaknesses in the support system: what type of support do they get and from whom? One of the major problems confronting new principals is a sense of isolation. In responding to this survey, principals indicated that parents, district superintendents, and teachers were their primary sources of support. Very few mentioned other principals or colleges and universities as crucial parts of their support systems. Similarly, although principals describe the district superintendent as a main source of support, they report only moderate support relative to specific task areas. At the same time, they note that the bureaucracy is a major obstacles to their success and that the district does not provide resources critical to their success--including autonomy.

Conclusion

Despite emphasis on aspects of transformational leadership, the new principals' conceptions of their role appear to be traditional in a number of critical respects. They maintain a narrowly defined, closed system perspective of themselves as instructional leaders. They define their primary constituencies as teachers and parents but accord less recognition to other important members of the school community, such as the district superintendent, school board, and teachers union. Within the school context, their ideas about leadership are marked by contradictions and incongruities. They see instructional leadership as an important part of their role; but, as have their colleagues before them, they give more attention to the broader range of general managerial activities. While articulating notions of visionary leadership, they feel pressured to exercise traditional leadership. While recognizing the need for involvement, they resist sharing authority in formal ways with parents, teachers, or school-based management teams.

The new principals see themselves as leaders within the boundaries of the school, but within the district framework, they view themselves as subordinates who have little autonomy and are expected to be compliant rather than innovative. They are confronted by problems--some of which they attribute directly to the bureaucracy--and obstacles whose resolution is, in many cases, outside their direct control as school leaders. Yet, their role conception is characterized by an absence of strategies directed at the organizational conditions that directly impact on their performance. Political strategies receive almost no attention; symbolic strategies are only vaguely described.

Given the problems and competing demands the principals confront, it seems unlikely that even those who espouse transformational leadership will be able to implement transformational strategies and realize school reform unless additional support is forthcoming. This support needs to take several forms.

The central office plays an important role in determining the principal's effectiveness (Crow, 1990), and the support from the district during their succession can be critical (Hart, 1992; Jentz, 1982). Principals need support to enable them to meet the demands of succession. To the extent that the district is looking for innovation and reform, principals also need strong support "to divest themselves of a role concept of 'principal' developed over years of experience as educators" and to develop a new role concept.

Since completing the survey, many of the respondents have participated in Bank Street's on-going professional development program. Offering a combination of collegial networking opportunities, mentoring, and specialized training aimed at facilitating transformational leadership, this program is a unique effort to provide comprehensive services during the succession period. It is probably one of the first to be undertaken on such a large scale. The efficacy of this program needs to be examined: Has it, in fact, provided support to enable principals to negotiate successfully the difficult first years? Has it relieved the burden of isolation and helped the principals to develop a collegial network? Has the program enabled those principals who view themselves as transformational leaders to act in a way consistent with their own vision?

Principal participation in this professional development program is one indicator of district support for the new principals; but because the district plays such a critical role in determining principal effectiveness, this relationship needs to be examined more closely. While principals see themselves as leaders within the school context, they also see themselves as subordinates in a bureaucracy that creates obstacles to their success. Within this larger organizational framework, principals who want to succeed must respond to perceived expectations.

In this large urban system, principals perceive that district superintendents expect managerial competence and compliance and are not interested in transformative or collaborative leadership. If these perceptions are correct, it would seem to militate against role innovation. However, the principals' perceptions may not be an accurate reflection of superintendent expectations. Studies of superintendent expectations for principals find that superintendents often focus on the need for leadership behavior. At the same time, however, they also stress the need to comply with rules and regulations. In a study of school principals in Canada, Kelsey (1992) found that those principals who were negatively evaluated by the superintendent were most frequently criticized for an absence of leadership. This included their failure to provide goals and direction, to have--and to be seen to have--an overall sense of the desirable for the school. Another indicator of the absence of leadership was their inability to establish a stable and predictable set of procedures conducive to positive interpersonal relations. At the same time, superintendents expected principals to know and follow the rules and regulations. Kasten and Asbaugh ( ) found that superintendents valued human skills more than

technical and conceptual skills and wanted principals to use their own judgment in dilemmas, but at the same time did not want principals to defy district policy.

The importance of district support and the conflicting information about principals' perceptions of that support suggest the need for further study regarding the relationship between principals and district superintendents and the nature of superintendent expectations. What are the expectations: formal and informal? How are these expectations conveyed and how do they influence the principals' conceptions of their leadership roles? To what extent do the expectations and feedback enhance transactional rather than transformational leadership?

If district superintendents want principals to act as change agents, they must convey these expectations clearly and provide principals with the authority, autonomy, and resources necessary to exercise leadership. "Like teachers, principals must not only be encouraged but empowered to make changes if changes are to occur" (Maehr et al, p. 424).

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